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NEW APPROACH TO DISARMAMENT

On the eve of the opening of the current 10-nation disarmament meetings in Geneva, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Green, spoke to the House of Commons as follows regarding the disarmament plan that would represent "the negotiating position of the West":

"...Honourable members will understand that what has been formulated and announced is an initial negotiating position. This means that it may undergo modification as the negotiations develop, for there could be no negotiating if one side or the other were to stand on a fixed and inflexible position. Canada will urge that the Western negotiators continue to seek improvements in an effort to reach agreement with the Soviet side.

"While both the Western powers and the Soviet Union have put forward blueprints for a three-stage programme, the proposals of the West do not constitute a package. They call for study leading to agreement on specific measures of disarmament. However, as soon as required studies on many items are completed, the appropriate agreements can be concluded and implemented, whether or not other items in the same stage are ready for agreement. Therefore, in areas where it proves possible to move forward to agreement, progress will be rapid and there can quickly be partial measures of disarmament within the scope of the general plan.

"I have said that there is agreement among the Western powers on the broad lines of the

programme presented. There have been, and remain, differences of approach and emphasis, just as there are differences of interest and judgment. For example, under instructions, General Burns has pressed to have urgent attention given to measures of nuclear disarmament and he has had some success in this respect, though not as much as I should have liked. In this approach we shared to a degree the views of the French Government, whose proposals dealing with the control of the means of delivering nuclear warheads seemed to meet one of the major causes of anxiety in the world today.

"Similarly, in our view, the items concerning the cut-off in the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes and the conversion of existing stocks to peaceful uses deserve higher priority and should be closely linked with the reduction of armed forces and armaments to the levels proposed.

"While these views have found some expression in the Western plan, we continue to believe that there is room for improvement. In line with this attitude, we welcome the inclusion, early in the Western programme, of studies and measures designed to prohibit, under effective control, the placing in outer space of weapons of mass destruction.

"As it stands, the Western position is realistic, negotiable, and offers no threat to the security of any state. It looks forward to an ultimate goal of general disarmament, applicable to all countries with a significant